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NEW S.C. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY LAUNCHES TODAY

Toll free complaint line and online submission available now

[COLUMBIA, S.C., JULY 1, 2019] The South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA) launches today, Monday, July 1, 2019. Beginning today, the public is able to submit a complaint related to services being provided to a child by a state agency. Submit complaints by calling the toll-free line (1-800-206-1957) between 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. or electronically 24/7 by visiting childadvocate.sc.gov and clicking Submit Complaint.

The Department of Children's Advocacy, established by Act 160 of the South Carolina General Assembly, is a new independent state agency to ensure children across South Carolina receive adequate protection and care from services or programs offered for children by the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Mental Health, Department of Social Services, John de la Howe School, School for the Deaf and Blind, and Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. DCA will examine, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children and recommend ways to improve the quality of those services in developing and promoting a broad vision for statewide reform. DCA is comprised of three divisions: Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program, Foster Care Review Board, and Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children.

DCA is led by Director and State Child Advocate Amanda F. Whittle, appointed by Governor Henry McMaster. Director Whittle comes to the new agency with a wealth of experience in law and public service. Prior to her appointment, she worked as an Assistant General Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Social Services, a family court practitioner, and the attorney for the volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program. She is certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) through the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC), is a graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law, and is admitted to the South Carolina Bar and United States District Court.

"I am grateful to Governor Henry McMaster, the South Carolina Senate, and the Joint Citizens & Legislative Committee on Children for the opportunity to serve as our state's first State Child Advocate and Director of the Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA). Over the past few weeks, I have met and spoken with leadership from other agencies, new internal DCA team members and community child advocates. I am thankful and humbled by the confidence and encouragement they have conveyed and am committed to being focused and intentional regarding advocacy, accountability and service for children," says Director Amanda Whittle.

Director Whittle will be available to speak to the media Thursday, July 11, 2019 between 10-10:20 a.m. in the Edgar Brown Building located at 1209 Pendleton Street, room 415. Visit the S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy website at childadvocate.sc.gov for further information. Contact the Director of Communications Keywa Thomas at Keywa.Thomas@childadvocate.sc.gov for any questions.

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